

**DIXIE TRANSPORTATION EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (DTEC)**  
**MINUTES**  
**February 17, 2010**

**PRESENT**

Jim Eardley, Chair, Washington County Commission  
Alan Gardner, Washington County Commission  
Chris Hart, Ivins City Mayor  
Matt Ence, Santa Clara City Council  
Jerry Lewis, UDOT Commissioner  
Lowell Elmer, MPO Director  
Mike Empey, Congressional Aide, Jim Matheson  
Marreen Casper, Congressional Aide, Orrin Hatch  
Bryan Thiriot, Congressional Aide, Robert Bennett  
Nathan Lee, UDOT  
Dean Cox, Washington County Administrator  
Larry Bulloch, St. George City Public Works Director  
David Glenn, Ivins City  
Todd Edwards, Washington County Public Works  
Ross Romero, Washington City  
Wally Ritchie, Santa Clara City Manager  
Eldon Bingham, UDOT Air Quality Program Coordinator  
Kathryn Webb Dahlin, Legislative Assistant for Senator Bennett in Washington D.C.  
Christine Hall, Washington County Commission

**ABSENT**

Monty Thurber, Engineering Associate, St. George City  
Troy Torgersen, UDOT  
Roger Bundy, Washington City Council  
Jerry Blair, Ivins City Council  
Gil Almquist, St. George City Council  
Dan McArthur, St. George City Mayor  
Cameron Cutler, Assistant City Engineer, St. George City  
Ken Sizemore, Five County AOG Executive Director

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Eardley called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m. He called for a motion on the January 20, 2010 meeting minutes.

**2. MINUTES**

**Motion:** Mayor Hart made a motion to accept the January 20, 2010, meeting minutes as submitted.

**Second:** Commissioner Lewis seconded the motion.

**Vote:** All voted "aye," and the motion passed unanimously.

### **3. ACTION ITEMS**

#### **A. Approve Draft 2011 Dixie TIP**

Lowell Elmer said that he left the Draft 2011 TIP in his office and will send it out to all members later today.

### **4. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### **A. Regional Air Quality Program Update / DAQ/DEQ**

Lowell said that representatives from DEQ in Salt Lake City were scheduled to be present at this meeting but have not arrived. He said he would ask them to return for the March meeting. In the meantime, Eldon Bingham, Air Quality Program Coordinator with UDOT, said that the national level of ozone is in the process of being changed. A year ago the National Engineer Quality Standard was .8; then in December of last year the Obama Administration requested that the EPA suspend that standard for further review. There was discussion regarding lowering the limit to somewhere between .6 and .7. If that becomes the new standard, Mr. Bingham said, just about everybody who is near that level will be in a non-attainment situation. He said that, in his opinion, lowering the limit to .6 is going too far; the science indicates that .7 would be adequate. There is currently a public comment period in effect, with many of the western states being concerned. In Utah, Zion National Park would be a non-attainment area at that standard because of vehicle exhaust fumes. The Park has gone to the shuttle system to eliminate some of the mobile exhaust.

Ozone drifts for hundreds of miles, and on the Nevada side, monitoring shows that the ozone levels are elevated from Las Vegas to Mesquite. In Utah, ozone is drifting up the Virgin Valley and into St. George. On a national level, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) is projecting that the new standard will be released in August. An implementation schedule will be released simultaneously, giving a timetable for each community to come into compliance. If St. George becomes a non-attainment area, then the DEQ and DAQ will be responsible for developing a state implementation plan within three (3) years, after which time the MPO would do a conformity determination to analyze air quality and ensure compliance with the state requirements.

If the County fails to meet those standards, it will be in non-conformity, at which time the federal government has the option to limit the amount of federal dollars available for use on County projects. On the East Coast, where ozone is blown by prevailing winds from one state to another, several states formed a consortium to work together on solving the ozone problem. In the West, where the states are larger geographically, it is a more difficult problem. There will be a lot of political fallout on the climate change issue, as the federal government forces bureaucratic control over environmental issues. The EPA has now declared CO<sub>2</sub> a pollutant. On the state level, we need to meet the compliance standards as best we can.

Mike Empey explained that he is seeing some legislation that indicates that regulatory agencies

cannot get ahead of Congress in trying to decide the future of these issues. There was a lot of politics involved with the cap and trade energy bill that passed the House last October, and Chairman Eardley said it makes him fearful, because the County could literally be shut down, waiting for all this to be sorted out.

Kathryn Webb Dahlin, representing Senator Bennett's office in Washington, D.C., concurred. She said that the EPA has considerably more power and authority in the current administration than it did during the Bush Administration and that it is moving forward with several goals. The cap and trade bill is basically dead in the Senate, but the EPA is, in essence, trying to legislate without the legislature.

Matt Ence asked Mr. Bingham whether any consideration is given during the rating process for ozone level compliance to the fact that Washington County may have higher ozone levels than are desirable out of no fault of its own, but because of transport of ozone from California and/or Nevada. Mr. Bingham replied that up to now, if there is a non-attainment area within a state, it is up to that state to deal with it. However, many states are protesting that they are unable to handle the problem within the state, as ozone levels shift because of transport issues.

Matt Ence asked for the status of the comment period, and Mr. Bingham said the comment period on a national level ends approximately February 23<sup>rd</sup>, after which the EPA will take 90 or 120 days to review all the comments and make a final decision, expected in August, on a national ozone standard. If Utah does get declared a non-attainment area for the new ozone standard, the state has 3 years to develop an air quality plan. At that point, the state would monitor the inventory of industrial and automotive pollution sources and determine what needs to be fixed to bring the county back into attainment.

Commissioner Lewis said that he was on a committee several years ago and was surprised to discover the extent of ozone transport – even from as far away as Mexico. The question was asked whether there is a “czar” that oversees this problem, and Mr. Bingham said probably the EPA Administrator would be considered to hold that position.

Chairman Eardley asked whether, if the standard were lowered to .7, that would constitute a problem for Washington County. Mr. Bingham said that his understanding is that any level lower than .8, which is approximately where the County currently is, would be a problem. Mr. Elmer said that the DAQ is going to be doing a series of mobile tests beginning in March and will receive credit for that work once the state begins monitoring ozone levels in the County.

Dean Cox added that the summer wildfires also contribute to elevated ozone and other pollution levels in the County, and Chairman Eardley added that southwestern Utah also receives considerable contaminants from California fires during that season.

## **5. UDOT/FHWA BUSINESS**

Nathan Lee of UDOT reported on the status of Exit 4 (Bloomington Exit) off of I-15. It was agreed

among the group that the Bloomington Exit is very problematic, with perhaps too much signage. Nathan said the initial work on those roads was hampered by weather, which affected the seal of the pavement, but his crews hope to begin paving next week.

David Glenn asked about the golf course relocation project and was told that it was a separate contract.

On Tuesday, Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup> at 1:00 p.m. at the Hilton Garden Inn, a Public Open House will be held for subcontractors and suppliers to be briefed on the Dixie Drive Interchange project. Chairman Eardley asked how the bridges will be constructed, and Nathan said they will be built on-site using pre-cast panels rather than constructed off-site and then moved. On-site construction will limit exposure to construction inconvenience for residents.

Additionally, the Transportation Commission will be in Washington County on March 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> at the St. George City Council Chambers. It will tour the County and then hold a public meeting the next morning.

## **6. OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Dahlin reported on transportation issues in Washington, D.C. She said that before the end of the month there must be some Congressional action on the extension of the transportation re-authorization package, which expires Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>. Several weeks ago a jobs package was introduced which met some opposition, and a new jobs package should be presented and voted on in the Senate shortly. The new bill is expected to include an extension of the transportation re-authorization until the end of 2010. This would insure that current levels would be maintained until the end of the year. Some funding options would be a gas tax hike, mileage tax (car registration), toll roads, etc.

It was decided that Lowell Elmer will draft a letter, to be reviewed and approved by all members, stating the MPO's opposition to lowering the Ozone Standard. Comments by members should be received no later than March 1, 2010, so that the final letter may be submitted in a timely manner to the EPA.

**Motion:** Motion by Commissioner Lewis to Oppose Lowering the Current .08ppm Standard for Ozone.  
**Second:** Motion seconded by Matt Ence and carried by unanimous vote.  
**Vote:** All voted "aye," and the motion passed unanimously.

A question was asked about the next wave of stimulus funding, and information is expected pertaining to the stimulus package within the next few weeks.

Lowell will send the proposed 2011 TIP with an accompanying table to all members, and also check boundary lines for Old Highway 91 going into the Shivwitz Reservation through Kayenta for purposes of a chip seal project.

**NEXT MEETING: March 17, 2010**

Having no other business, Chairman Eardley adjourned the meeting at 1:20 p.m.

.